

TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FISCAL REVIEW COMMITTEE



FISCAL NOTE

HB 423 - SB 422

March 20, 2017

SUMMARY OF BILL: Authorizes any registered voter to vote absentee in any primary, general, or runoff election. Requires voters to submit a certification regarding their identity on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State to be submitted with an application to vote by mail-in absentee ballot. Requires election commissions to recount paper ballots, including absentee ballots for elections.

ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT:

Increase State Expenditures –

\$917,200/FY19-20 and Every Four Years Thereafter

Increase Local Expenditures –

\$917,200/FY17-18 and Every Four Years Thereafter*

\$1,834,500/FY18-19 and Every Two Years Thereafter*

Assumptions:

- Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-6-201, only certain registered voters are permitted to vote by absentee ballot.
- The proposed legislation would authorize all registered voters to vote via absentee ballot.
- County election commissions will receive a greater number of requests for absentee ballots as a result of this legislation; however costs to each county will vary based on the number of registered voters.
- Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-6-202(a), a voter who desires to vote absentee shall request an absentee ballot by submission of an application containing certain identifying information of the voter as well as a document that includes the voter's signature.
- Some county election commission offices will require additional staff for verifying the signature and identifying information of the voter provided on the application and absentee ballot, pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-6-202(b) – (g).
- There will also be an increase in local expenditures for postage costs associated with mailing an absentee ballot to a qualified voter who has completed an application.
- Based on information provided by the Division of Elections, a poll of counties indicates an increase in local expenditures statewide of \$917,237 per election, for increased staffing and postage costs.

- Such absentee ballots will only be cast in years of a primary, general, or runoff election. Therefore, in FY17-18 and every four years thereafter, there will be a mandatory increase in local expenditures of \$917,237; and in FY18-19 and every two years thereafter, there will be a mandatory increase in local expenditures of \$1,834,474 (\$917,237 per election x 2 elections) for the August primary and November general elections.
- In years with a Presidential Preference Primary the state will be responsible for such costs; therefore, in FY19-20 and every four years thereafter, there will be an increase in state expenditures of \$917,237.

**Article II, Section 24 of the Tennessee Constitution provides that: no law of general application shall impose increased expenditure requirements on cities or counties unless the General Assembly shall provide that the state share in the cost.*

CERTIFICATION:

The information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Krista M. Lee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Krista M. Lee, Executive Director

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